

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Review Item:

Secondary GED Program

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

704 KAR 7:150

History/Background:

Existing Policy. In the 2004 session of the Kentucky General Assembly, House Bill 178 specified that a student would not be counted as a dropout if the student is enrolled in a district-operated or district-contracted alternative program leading to a certificate of completion or a General Educational Development (GED) diploma. In order for a student to participate in a district-operated or district contracted program that would lead to a GED, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) was required to apply to the American Council on Education for permission as a state to offer GED Option programs. KDE received approval of its application to the American Council on Education in July 2005. The 2005-2006 school year was the first year of implementation of the program.

The Secondary GED Option is designed to be an integral component of a high school curriculum that provides another way to obtain a high school level credential. Specifically, the GED Option is targeted for a subgroup of students who have the academic capabilities to complete high school requirements, but for a variety of adjustment and life circumstance obstacles are behind in the credits needed to graduate with their class and are at risk of leaving school without a high school credential. The GED Option provides these students a viable second opportunity to stay in school and acquire the necessary high school level knowledge and skills to pass the GED Tests and earn a high school diploma/credential within the same time frame as their peers.

KDE's application to the American Council on Education defined (through 704 KAR 7:150) Kentucky's criteria for student eligibility and participation in a program that would target students who had made the decision to drop out of school, were credit deficient, and yet were academically capable of completing the Secondary GED Option Program. To summarize, the criteria includes that a student shall:

- Be at least sixteen years old
- Be at least two grade levels behind the cohort group with which the student entered high school
- Have at least four (4) credits toward graduation
- Be academically able to participate
- Receive counseling prior to and regularly after admission to the program
- Participate voluntarily through signed consent

- Participate in a minimum of 15 hours of instruction per week
- Participate in, in addition to the mandated instruction, in other educational opportunities as aligned to the students' Individual Learning Plan (ILP) such as Career and Technical Education, internships, cooperative learning projects, service learning, etc.
- Receive instruction through a variety of modes and strategies
- Participate in Commonwealth Accountability Testing while enrolled in the program

Kentucky received approval from the American Council on Education in July of 2005 for the Kentucky Secondary GED Program.

Results to Date

At the June 2005 meeting of the Kentucky Board of Education, the Board requested that staff present a status report at a future meeting on the results of implementing the Secondary GED option.

As of June 2006, nineteen (19) districts had received approval from the Kentucky Department of Education to operate district Secondary GED programs. Each of the superintendents in the approved districts submitted Letters of Assurance to KDE verifying that they would adhere to the guidelines established in the administrative regulation. Staff worked closely with the districts in designing, implementing and monitoring their programs. Districts that served students in the Secondary GED Program were required to submit data to KDE by June 30, 2006, regarding the program. A synopsis of that data is included in **Attachment A** and is summarized below:

- 6 of the 19 districts did not identify any students for participation in the Secondary GED program during the 2005-2006 school year.
- 161 students were served through the Secondary GED Program.
- 73 students obtained their Kentucky High School Equivalency Diploma (GED) through the Secondary GED program.
- 42 students are returning to the Secondary GED program for instruction in the 2006-2007 school year.
- 48 students exited the program without completion. Follow-up with local districts indicates that while some students did drop out, other students went on to the Adult Education GED program, withdrew to other districts, or enrolled in other alternative placements in the district.

Impact on Getting to Proficiency:

The American Council on Education (ACE) has defined the secondary GED option as a “second chance” for a high school diploma and not as an option “in lieu of” a regular track. Kentucky has designed and districts are implementing a secondary GED program that meets high academic, instructional, and social standards. The Secondary GED program ensures that students enrolled in this program receive aligned instruction, counseling services, and access to a variety of instructional resources and opportunities that are aligned to the students’ postsecondary goals.

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Commissioner of Education**Date:**

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